Dermatology – An Illustrated Colour Text, D.J. Gawkrödger. Pp. 128, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, London, New York, 1992. Paperback £14.95.

In his preface to this book, Dr Gawkrödger draws attention to the very competitive market place that now prevails for medical textbooks. Dermatology is no exception. His book, he suggests, is unique in its presentation, by using 'a format of individually designed double-page spreads, generously illustrated with colour photographs, line drawings, tables, bulleted items and "key point" summaries'. Contents are divided into three sections – The Biology of Skin & Clinical Evaluation; The Common Cutaneous Disorders; Special Topics in Dermatology.

I think that the modern layout is a success, with the tables, bulleted items, and key point summaries, making the facts readily intelligible at a leisurely reading and, potentially, more rapidly revisable on perhaps a more hurried pre-examination occasion. The book lacks little in content and certainly contains important information missing from other undergraduate texts. The only disappointment is with some of the clinical photographs which are of poor quality. Partly this is because they are reduced overmuch in size but there may also be technical reasons beyond my ken. Despite this the book deserves to be a success against some tough pre-existing competition in other monographs and dermatology chapters in textbooks of general medicine.

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Quality in Health Care (Journal), edited by F. Moss. Pp. 83, not illustrated. BMJ, London, 1992. Paperback Subscription UK £75, personal rate £45.

Quality in Health Care is a new journal from BMA House arising from the medical audit sections of the *BMJ* and with the aim of providing 'a focus for the interest of and investment, both in work and time, by health professionals, policy makers, and academics in the evaluation of effectiveness and quality of health care.' The editor, Fiona Moss, makes clear on page one that this is not a bid for a new speciality but that the issue of quality is central to the work of all specialists and health care staff.

The first number indicates the journal's style; a mixture of original papers, invited articles, reviews of topics promoting quality, book reviews, diary, meeting reports together with two more original ideas – effectiveness bulletins and purchasing for quality. These bulletins are evaluations of evidence on the effectiveness of clinical interventions and are derived from work undertaken by the Nuffield Institute in Leeds. The section on purchasing for quality allows provider experts to indicate what quality of care they would wish to purchase for their area of clinical activity. The idea that medical audit and papers on quality are 'just watered down clinical research' is put to rest by a stimulating article on audit as the 'third clinical science' which indicates the scientific rigour required for successful medical audit. The presentation and format of the journal is very attractive and the articles

in this first issue of high quality. As a monthly journal the editorial board will need to work hard to be able to maintain this quality standard they have set.

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Colour Guide to Rheumatology, J.M.H. Moll. Pp. 160, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, London, Edinburgh, 1992. Paperback £7.95.

This is an excellent little pocketbook offering a concise yet comprehensive pictorial guide to a wide range of rheumatological disorders. It is a most welcome addition to the colour guide series on medical specialities aimed primarily at medical students. As the author points out, rheumatology is particularly suited to pictorial representation and he should be complimented on compiling such an excellent series of illustrations.

The book is divided into sections covering rheumatoid arthritis, the spondylo-arthropathies, connective tissue disorders, degenerative diseases, the crystal-arthropathies, infective arthritides, rheumatic manifestations of systemic conditions, metabolic bone disease, juvenile rheumatic disorders and miscellaneous conditions. Over 250 clinical photographs and X-rays of excellent quality are accompanied by concise and relevant text. It is surprising how much information can be crammed into such a small book and perhaps one small criticism would be that some of the illustrations are a little small. The layout allows for easy access and rapid learning. This is a good value, practical book particularly suited for medical students and doctors preparing for examinations. It is also ideal as an *aide memoire* for junior doctors and health care specialists within rheumatology.

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Aids to Clinical Examination, second edition, P.C. Hayes. Pp. 152, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Milan, New York, 1992. Paperback £8.95.

This is a little book of sensible lists for Finals and it is good. It would be folly to flirt with Finals or mount the Membership without flipping through this *aide memoire*. There are a few idiosyncrasies (for example, asterixis for flapping tremor) but into 140 pages the authors have concentrated the essence of clinical medicine. The book is essentially about clinical examining for examinations. It is a touch expensive to be real value for money.

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